5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

BY

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.
F. R. S.

THE SECOND EDITION,

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

VOL. V.

——————— Non fabula mendax
Ausa loqui de fonte tuo est: ubicunque videris,
Quaereris; et nulli contigit gloria genti,
Ut Nilo sit laeta suo; tua flumina prodam,
Quà Deus undarum celator, Nile, tuarum
Te mihi nosse dedit.

LUCAN.

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Title Page

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE.

BOOK V.—CONTINUED.

CHAP. XII.

State of Religion—Circumcision, Excision, &c.

346 THERE is no country in the world in which there are so many churches as in Abyssinia. Though the country is very mountainous, and consequently the view much obstructed, it is very seldom you see less than five or six churches; and, if you are on a commanding ground, five times that number. Every great [83] man, that dies, thinks he has atoned for all his wickedness if he leaves a fund to build a church, or has built one in his lifetime. The king builds many. Where- 346 ever a victory is gained, there a church * is erected in 727 the very field, stinking with the putrid bodies of the slain. Formerly this was only the case when the ene-

* The oldest churches in Habbesh are those in the province of Tigre. Axum, now in ruins, possessed many before the Adelan war. A list of these is given in the Appendix of Kebir Neguste, or Chronicle of Axum; and of the lands which they possessed, as given by several kings. T.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 [727] my was Pagan or Infidel; now the same is observed when the victories are over Christians.

346 351 [783] The situation of a church is always chosen near running water, for the convenience of their purifications and ablutions, in which they observe strictly the Levitical law. They are always placed upon the top of some beautiful, round hill, which is surrounded entirely with rows of the oxycedrus, or Virginia cedar, which grows here in great beauty and perfection, and is called Arz *. There is nothing adds so much to the beauty of the country as these churches, and the plantations about them.

In the middle of this plantation of cedars is interspersed, at proper distances, a number of those beautiful trees called Cusso, which grow very high, and are all extremely picturesque.

346 All the churches are round, with thatched roofs; their summits are perfect cones; the outside is surrounded by a number of wooden pillars, which are nothing else than the trunks of the cedar-tree, and are placed to support the edifice, about eight feet of the roof projecting beyond the wall of the church, which forms an agreeable walk, or colonade, around it in hot weather, or in rain. The inside of the church is in several divisions, according as is prescribed by the law of Moses. The first is a circle somewhat wider than the inner one; here the congregation sit and pray. Within this is a square, and that square is divided by a veil or curtain, in which is another very

* Ludolf, in his dictionary, says, this word, in Hebrew, signifies any tall tree. In this, however, he is mistaken. The translators did not, indeed, know what tree it was, and so have said this to cover their ignorance; but Arz is as exclusively the oxycedrus, as is an oak or an elm when so named. Arz is indeed a tall tree, but every tall tree is not Arz, which is the Virginia berry-bearing cedar.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

small division answering to the holy of holies. This 346
is so narrow, that none but the priests can go into it.
You are bare-footed whenever you enter the church; 783
and, if bare-footed, you may go through every part of
it, if you have any such curiosity, provided you are
pure, i. e. have not been concerned with women for
24 hours before, or touched carrion, or dead bodies
(a curious assemblage of ideas); for in that case you
are not to go within the precincts, or outer circumfe-
rence of the church, but stand and say your prayers
at an awful distance among the cedars.

All persons of both sexes, under Jewish disqualifi-
cations, are obliged to observe this distance; and this
is always a place belonging to the church, where, un-
less in Lent, you see the greatest part of the congrega-
tion; but this is left to your own conscience; and, if
there was either great inconvenience in the one situa-
tion, or great satisfaction in the other, the cause would
be otherwise.

When you go to the church, you put off your shoes 782
before your first entering the outer precinct; but you
must leave a servant there with them, or else they
will be stolen, if good for any thing, by the priests
and monks before you come out of the church. At
entry you kiss the threshold, and two door-posts, go in
and say what prayer you please; that finished, you
come out again, and your duty is over. The churches 532
are full of pictures, painted on parchment, and nailed 346
upon the walls, in a manner little less slovenly than
you see paltry prints in beggarly country ale-houses.
There has been always a sort of painting known a-
mong the scribes, a daubing much inferior to the
worst of our sign-painters. Sometimes, for a particu-
lar church, they get a number of pictures of saints,
on skins of parchment, ready finished from Cairo, in
a style very little superior to these performances of

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

346 their own. They are placed like a frize, and hung in
532 the upper part of the wall. St George is generally there with his dragon, and Demetrius fighting a lion. There is no choice in their saints; they are both of the Old and New Testament, and some that might be dispensed with from both. There is St Pontius Pilate and his wife; there is St Balaam and his ass; Samson and his jaw-bone; and so of the rest. But the thing that surprised me most was a kind of square-miniature upon the front of the head-piece, or mitre, of the priest, administering the sacrament at Adowa, representing Pharaoh on a white horse, plunging in the Red Sea, with many guns and pistols swimming upon the surface of it around him.

Nothing embossed, nor in relief, ever appears in any of the churches; all this would be reckoned idolatry, so much that they do not wear a cross, as has been represented, on the top of the ball of the sendick, or standard, because it casts a shade; but there is no doubt that pictures have been used in their churches from the very earliest age of Christianity.

793 The Abuna is looked upon as the patriarch of the Abyssinian church, for they have little knowledge of the Coptic patriarch of Alexandria. We are perfectly ignorant of the history of these prelates for many years after their appointment. The first of these mentioned is Abuna Tecla Haimanout, who distinguished himself by the restoration of the royal family, and the regulations he made both in the church and state, as we have seen in the history of those times. A very remarkable, but wise regulation was then made, that the Abyssinians should not have it in their power to choose one of their own countrymen as Abuna.

Wise men saw the fallen state of literature among them; and unless opportunity was given, from time to time, for their priests to go abroad to Jerusalem for their instruction, and for the purpose of bringing the

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set 793
of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them.

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the 793
Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of 175
Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, 779
and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1300, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians.

As the Abuna very seldom understands the lan- 793
guage, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand,

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

5: Bruce T:5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

793 after making two or three signs, he blows with his mouth twice or thrice upon them, saying, "Let them be deacons." I saw once all the army of Begemder made deacons, just returned from shedding the blood of 10,000 men, thus drawn up in Aylo Meidan, and the Abuna standing at the church of St Raphael, about a quarter of a mile distant from them. With these were mingled about 1000 women, who, consequently, having part of the same blast and brandishment of the cross, were as good deacons as the rest.

The same is performed with regard to monks. A crowd of people, when he is riding, will assemble within 500 yards of him, and there begin a melancholy song. He asks, who these men with beards are? they tell him they want to be ordained monks. After the same sign of the cross, and three blasts with his mouth, he orders them to be monks. But, in ordaining priests, they must be able to read a chapter of St Mark, which they do in a language he does not understand a word of. They then give the Abuna a brick of salt, to the value of perhaps sixpence, for their ordination; which, from their present given, the Jesuits maintained to be simoniacal.

The Itchegue is the chief of the monks in general, especially those of Debra Libanos. The head of the other monks, called those of St Eustathius, is the superior of the convent of Mahebar Selasse, on the N. W. corner of Abyssinia, near Kuara, and the Shangalla, towards Sennaar and the river Dender. All this tribe is grossly ignorant, and through time, I believe, will lose the use of letters entirely.

The Itchegue is ordained by two chief priests holding a white cloth, or veil, over him, while another says a prayer; and then they lay all their hands on his head, and join in psalms together. He is a man, in troublesome times, of much greater consequence

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures. 793

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them. 793 794

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have been inquired into and discussed with so much keenness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice. 175 779

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

175 779 Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

779 The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

doctrines, and definitions of the time of St Athanasius, 779
are all wrapt up in tenfold darkness, and inextricable from amidst the thick clouds of heresy and ignorance of language. Nature is often mistaken for person, and person for nature; the same of the human substance. It is monstrous to hear their reasoning upon it. One would think, that every different monk, every time he talks, purposely broaches some new heresy. Scarce one of them that ever I conversed with, and those of the very best of them, would suffer it to be said, that Christ's body was perfectly like ours. Nay, it was easily seen, that, in their hearts, they went still further, and were very loth to believe, if they did believe at all, that the body of the Virgin Mary and St Anne were perfectly human.

Not to trouble the reader further with these uninteresting particulars and distinctions, I shall only add, that the Jesuits, in the account they give of the heresies, ignorance, and obstinacy of the Abyssinian clergy, have not misrepresented them, in the imputations made against them, either in point of faith or of morals. Whether, this being the case, the mission they undertook of themselves into that country, gave them authority to destroy the many with a view to convert the few, is a question to be resolved hereafter; I believe it did not; and that the tares and the wheat should have been suffered to grow together till a hand of more authority, guided by unerring judgement, pulled them, with that portion of safety he had pre-ordained for both.

The Protestant writers again unfairly triumph over their adversaries, the Catholics, by asking, Why all that noise about the two natures in Christ? It is plain, say they, from passages in the Haimanout Abou, and their other tracts upon orthodox belief, that they acknowledge that Christ was perfect God and perfect

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

779 man, of a rational soul and human flesh subsisting, and that all the confessions of unity, co-equality, and inferiority, are there expressed in the clearest manner as received in the Greek church. What necessity was there for more; and what need of disputing upon these points, already so fully settled?

This, I beg leave to say, is unfair; for, though it is true, that, at the time of collecting the Haimanout Abou, and at the time when St Athanasius, St Cyril, and St Chrysostom wrote, the explanation of these points was uniform in favour of orthodoxy, and that while access could easily be had to Jerusalem, or Alexandria, then Greek and Christian cities, difficulties, if any arose, were easily resolved; yet, at the time the Jesuits came, those books were very rare in the country, and the contents of them so far from being understood, that they were applied to the support of the grossest heresies, from the misinterpretation of the ignorant monks of these latter times. That the Abyssinians had been orthodox availed nothing: they were then become as ignorant of the doctrines of St Athanasius and St Cyril, as if those fathers had never wrote; and it is their religion at this period which the Jesuits condemn, not that of the church of Alexandria, when in its purity under the first patriarchs; and, to complete all their misfortunes, no access to Jerusalem is any longer open to them, and very rarely communication with Cairo.

On the other hand, the Jesuits, who found that the Abyssinians were often wrong in some things, were resolved to deny that they could be right in any thing; and, from attacking their tenets, they fell upon their ceremonies received in the Greek church at the same time with Christianity; and, in this dispute they shewed great ignorance and malevolence, which they supported by the help of falsehood and invention.—

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

I shall take notice of only one instance in many, because it has been insisted upon by both parties with unusual vehemence, and very little candour. 779

It was settled by the first general council, that one baptism only was necessary for the regeneration of man, for freeing him from the sin of our first parents, and listing him under the banner of Christ; "I confess one baptism for the remissions of sins," says the Symbol. Now, it was maintained by the Jesuits, that in Abyssinia, once every year, they baptized all grown people, or adults. I shall, as briefly as possible, set down what I myself saw while on the spot. 783 796

The small river, running between the town of Adowa and the church, had been dammed up for several days; the stream was scanty, so that it scarcely overflowed. It was in some places three feet deep, in some, perhaps, four, or little more. Three large tents were pitched the morning before the feast of the Epiphany; one, on the north, for the priests to repose in during intervals of the service, and, besides this, one to communicate in: on the south there was a third tent for the monks and priests of another church to rest themselves in their turn. About twelve clock at night the monks and priests met together, and began their prayers and psalms at the water-side, one party relieving each other. At dawn of day the governor, Welleta Michael, came hither with some soldiers to raise men for Ras Michael, then on his march against Waragna Fasil, and sat down on a small hill by the water-side, the troops all skirmishing on foot and on horseback around them.

As soon as the sun began to appear, three large crosses of wood were carried by three priests dressed in their sacerdotal vestments, and who, coming to the side of the river, dipt the cross into the water, and all this time the firing, skirmishing, and praying went on to-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 gether. The priests with the crosses returned, one
796 of their number before them carrying something less than an English quart of water in a silver cup, or chalice; when they were about fifty yards from Welleta Michael, that general stood up, and the priest took as much water as he could hold in his hand, and sprinkled it upon his head, holding the cup at the same time to Welleta Michael's mouth to taste; after which the priest received it back again, saying, at the same time, "Gzier ybarak," which is simply, "May God bless you." Each of the three crosses was then brought forward to Welleta Michael, and he kissed them. The ceremony of sprinkling the water was then repeated to all the great men in the tent, all cleanly dressed as in gala. Some of them, not contented with aspersion, received the water in the palms of their hands joined, and drank it there; more water was brought for those that had not partaken of the first; and, after the whole of the governor's company was sprinkled, the crosses returned to the river, their bearers singing hallelujahs, and the skirmishing and firing continuing.

Janni, my Greek friend, had recommended me to the priest of Adowa; and, as the governor had placed me by him, I had an opportunity, for both these reasons, of being served among the first. My friend, the priest, sprinkled water upon my head, and gave me his blessing in the same words he had used to the others; but, as I saw it was not necessary to drink, I declined putting the cup to my lips, for two reasons; one, because I knew the Abyssinians have a scruple to eat or drink after strangers; the other, because I apprehended the water was not perfectly clean; for no sooner had the crosses first touched the pool, and the cup filled from the clean part for the governor, than two or three hundred boys, calling themselves *deacons*,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

plunged in with only a white cloth, or rag, tied round their middle; in all other respects they were perfectly naked. All their friends and relations (indeed everybody) went close down to the edge of the pool, where water was thrown upon them, at first decently enough, by boys of the town, and those brought on purpose as deacons; but, after the better sort of people had received the aspersion, the whole was turned into a riot, the boys, muddying the water, threw it round them upon every one they saw well-dressed or clean. The governor retreated first, then the monks, and then the crosses, and left the brook in possession of the boys and blackguards, who rioted there till two o'clock in the afternoon.

I must, however, observe, that, a very little time after the governor had been sprinkled, two horses and two mules, belonging to Ras Michael and Ozoro Esther, came and were washed. Afterwards the soldiers went in and bathed their horses and guns; those who had wounds bathed them also. I saw no women in the bath uncovered, even to the knee; nor did I see any person of the rank of decent servants go into the water at all, except with the horses. Heaps of platters and pots, that had been used by Mahometans or Jews, were brought thither likewise to be purified; and thus the whole ended.

I saw this ceremony performed afterwards at Kahha, near Gondar, in presence of the king, who drank some of the water, and was sprinkled by the priests; then took the cup in his hand, and threw the rest that was left upon Amha Yasous *, saying, "I will be your deacon;" and this was thought a high compli-

* Prince of Shoa, often spoken of in the sequel.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 ment, the priest giving him his blessing at the same
796 time, but offering him no more water.

I shall now state, in his own words, the account given of this by Alvarez, chaplain to the Portuguese embassy, under Don Roderigo de Lima.

The king had invited Don Roderigo de Lima, the Portuguese ambassador, to be present at the celebration of the festival of the Epiphany. They went about a mile and a half from their former station, and encamped upon the side of a pond, which had been prepared for the occasion. Alvarez says, that, in their way, they were often asked by those they met or overtook, "Whether or not they were going to be baptized?" to which the chaplain and his company answered in the negative, as having been already once baptized in their childhood.

"In the night," says he, "a great number of priests assembled about the pond, roaring and singing with a view of blessing the water. After midnight the baptism began. The Abuna Mark, the king and queen, were the first that went into the lake; they had each a piece of cotton cloth about their middle, which was just so much more than the rest of the people had. At the sun-rising the baptism was most thronged; after which, when Alvarez * came, the lake was full of holy water, into which they had poured oil."

It should seem, from this outset of his narrative, that he was not at the lake till the ceremony was half over, and did not see the benediction of the water at all, nor the curious exhibition of the King, Queen, and Abuna, and their cotton cloths. As for the circumstance of the oil being poured into the water, I

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* Vide Alvarez's narrative in his account of the embassy of Don Roderigo de Lima, page 155.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

will not positively contradict it; for, though I was 783
early there, it might have escaped me if it was done 796
in the dark. However, I never heard it mentioned as part of the ceremony; and it is probable I should, if any such thing was really practised; neither was I in time to have seen it at Kahha.

"Before the pond a scaffold was built, covered round with planks, within which sat the king, looking towards the pond, his face covered with blue taffeta, while an old man, who was the king's tutor, was standing in the water up to the shoulders, naked as he was born, and half dead with cold, for it had frozen violently in the night. All those that came near him he took by the head and plunged them in the water, whether men or women, saying, in his own language, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

Now Shoa, where the king was then, is in lat. 8° N. and the sun was in 22° south declination, advancing northward, so the sun was, on the day of the Epiphany, within 30° of the zenith of the bathing-place. The thermometer of Fahrenheit rises at Gondar about [132]
that time to 68°, so in Shoa it cannot rise to less than 70°, for Gondar is in lat. 12° N. that is 4° farther northward, so it is not possible water should freeze, nor did I ever see ice in Abyssinia, not even on the highest or coldest mountains. January is one of the hottest months in the year, day and night the sky is perfectly serene, nor is there a long disproportioned winter night. At Shoa the days are equal to the nights, at least as to sense, even in the month of January.

The baptism, Alvarez says, began at midnight, and the old tutor dipt every person under water, taking him by the head, saying, "I baptize thee in the name

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
796 It was most thronged at sun-rise, and ended about nine o'clock; a long time for an old man to stand in frozen water.

The number (as women were promiscuously admitted) could not be less than 40,000; so that even the nine hours this baptist-general officiated, he must have had exercise enough to keep him warm, if 40,000 (many of them naked beauties) passed through his hands.

The women were stark naked before the men, not even the rag about them. Without such a proper medium as frozen water, I fear it would not have contributed much to the interests of religion to have trusted a priest (even an old one) among so many bold and naked beauties, especially as he had the first six hours of them in the dark.

783 The Abuna, the king, and queen, were the three
796 first baptized, all three being absolutely naked, having
291 only a cotton cloth round their middle. I am sure
831 there never could be a greater deviation from the manners of any kingdom, than this is from those of Abyssinia. The king is always covered; you seldom see any part of him but his eyes. The queen and every woman in Abyssinia, in public and private, (I mean where nothing is intended but conversation) are covered to the chin. It is a disgrace to them to have even their feet seen by strangers; and their arms and hands are concealed even to their nails. A curious circumstance, therefore, it would have been for the king to be so liberal of his queen's charms, while he covers his own face with blue taffeta; but to imagine that the Abuna, a Coptish monk, bred in the desert of St Macarius, would expose himself naked among naked women, contrary to the usual custom of the celebration he observes in his own church, is monstrous, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

must exceed all belief whatever. As the Abuna Mark too was of the reasonable age of 110 years, he might, I think, have dispensed at that time of life with a bathing gown, especially as it was frost. [783] [796] [298] [831]

The old man in the pond repeated the formula, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in his own language; and Alvarez, it is plain, understood not one word of Abyssinian. Yet, on the other hand, he speaks Latin to the king, who wonderfully understands him, and answers as decisively on the merits of the dispute as if he had been educated in the Sorbonne. "Confiteor unum baptizma," says Alvarez *, was a constitution of the Nicene council under Pope Leo. Right, says the king, whose church, however, anathematized Leo and the council he presided at; which both the king and Alvarez should have known was not the Nicene council, though the words of the symbol quoted are thought to be part of a confession framed by that assembly.

"Qui crediderit et baptizatus fuerit salvus erit," says Alvarez. "You say right," answers the king, "as to baptism; these are the words of our Saviour; but this present ceremony was lately invented by a grandfather of mine, in favour of such as have turned Moors, and are desirous again of becoming Christians."

I should think, in the first place, this answer of the king should have let Alvarez see no baptism was intended there; or, if it was a re-baptism, it only took place in favour of those who had turned Moors, and must therefore have been but partial. If this was really the case, what had the king, queen, and Abuna,

* Vid. Alvarez, hoc loco. Ramusio. Viaggi. p. 254.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 to do in it? Sure they had neither apostatized, nor
796 was the company of apostates a very creditable society for them.

Alvarez, to persuade us this is real baptism, says that oil was thrown into the pond before he came. He will not charge himself with having seen this, and it is probably a falsehood. But he knew it was an essential in baptism in all the churches in the East; so indeed is salt, which he should have said was here used likewise: then he would have had all the materials of Greek baptism; and this salt might have contributed to cooling the water, that had frozen under the rays of a burning sun.

Alvarez must have seen, that not only men and women go to be washed in the pool, but horses, cows, mules, and a prodigious number of asses. Are these baptised? I would wish to know the formula the reverend baptist-general used on their occasion.

There is but one church where I ever saw sacred rites, or something like baptism, conferred upon asses; it is, I think, at Rome, on St Andrew's or St Patrick's day. It should be St Balaam's, if he was in the Roman kalender as high as he is in the Abyssinian. In that church (it is, I think, on Monte Cavallo) all sorts of asses, about and within Rome, are gathered together, and showers of holy water and blessings rained by a priest upon them. What is the formula I do not know; although it is a joke put upon strangers, especially of one nation, to assemble them there; or whether the two churches of Rome and Abyssinia differ so much in this as in other points of discipline, I am not informed; but the rationality and decency of such a ceremony being the same in all churches, the service performed at the time should be the same likewise.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

I will not then have any scruple to say, that this whole account of Alvarez is a gross fiction; that no baptism, or any thing like baptism, is meant by the ceremony; that a man is no more baptised by keeping the anniversary of our Saviour's baptism, than he is crucified by keeping his crucifixion. The commemoration of our Saviour's baptism on the epiphany, and the blessing the waters that day, is an old observance of the eastern church, formerly performed in public in Egypt, as now in Ethiopia. Since that of Alexandria fell into the hands of Mahometans, the fear of insult and profanation has obliged them to confine this ceremony, and all other processions, within the walls of their churches, in each of which there is constantly a place devoted to this use. Those that cannot attend the ceremony of aspersion in the church, especially sick or infirm people, have the water sent to them, and a large contribution is made for the patriarch, or bishop; yet nobody ever took it into their heads to tax either Greek or Armenian with a repetition of baptism.

Monsieur de Tournefort *, in his travels through the Levant, gives you a figure of the Greek priest, who blesses the water in a peculiar habit, with a pastoral staff in his hand.

But, besides this, various falsehoods have likewise been propagated about the manner of baptism practised in Abyssinia; all in order to impugn the validity of it, and to excuse the rash conduct of the Jesuits for re-baptising all the Abyssinians, as if they had been a Jewish and Pagan people that never had been baptised at all. The violation of this article of the creed, or confession of Nice, was a cause of great offence to the

* Tournef. tom. i. p. 111.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

783 Abyssinians, and of the misfortunes that happened
796 afterwards. The whole of the Abyssinian service of baptism is in their liturgy. The Jesuits had plenty of copies in their hands, and could have pointed out the part of the service that was heretical, if they had pleased; they did not pretend, however, to do this, and their silence condemns them.

As for the idle stories that are told of the words pronounced, such as,—"I baptise you in the name of the Holy Trinity,"—"In the name of Peter and Paul,"—"I baptise you in the water of Jordan,"—"May God baptise you,"—"May God wash you," and many others, they are all invented by the Jesuits, to excuse the repetition of baptism in Abyssinia, which there was no sort of occasion for, as they might have examined the words and form in the liturgies, which are in every church; and I must here only observe, that if, as the chaplain Alvarez says, the priest in the pool, on the festival of the Epiphany, was so fond of the proper words, as even at that time, to say "I baptise you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," the words he quotes to shew that this immersion in water on the Epiphany is a real baptism, I cannot comprehend why they should vary them to other words, when nothing but baptism is meant. But this I can bear evidence of, that, in no time when I was present, as I have above a hundred times been, at the baptism both of adults and infants, aye, and of apostates too, I never heard other words pronounced than the orthodox baptismal ones, "I baptise thee in the name of "the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," immerging the child in pure water, into which they first pour a small quantity of oil of olives, in the form of a cross.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

The Abyssinians receive the holy sacrament in both kinds, in unleavened bread, and in the grape bruised with the husk together as it grows, so that it is a kind of marmalade, and is given in a flat spoon. Whatever they may pretend, some mixture seems necessary to keep it from fermentation in the state that it is in, unless the dried cluster is fresh bruised just before it is used; for it is little more fluid than the common marmalade of confectioners; but it is perfectly the grape as it grew, bruised stones and skin together. Some means, however, have been used, as I suppose, to prevent fermentation, and make it keep; and though this is constantly denied, I have often thought I tasted with a flavour that was not natural to the grape itself.

It is a mistake that there is no wine in Abyssinia; for a quantity of excellent strong wine is made at Dreeda, south-west from Gondar about thirty miles, which would more than supply the quantity necessary for the celebration of the eucharist in all Abyssinia twenty times over. The people themselves are not fond of wine, and plant the vine in one place only; and in this they have been imitated by the Egyptians, their colony; but a small black grape, of an excellent flavour, grows plentifully wild in every wood in Tigre.

Large pieces of bread are given to the communicants, in proportion to their quality; and I have seen great men, who, though they open their mouths as wide as conveniently a man can do, yet from the respect the priest bore him, such a portion of the loaf was put into his mouth, that water ran from his eyes, from the incapacity of chewing it; which, however, he does as indecently, and with full as much noise, as he eats at table.

After receiving the sacrament of the eucharist in

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

782 both kinds, a pitcher of water is brought, of which
796 the communicant drinks a large draught; and well he needs it to wash down the quantity of bread he has just swallowed. He then retires from the steps of the inner division, upon which the administering priest stands, and, turning his face to the wall of the church, in private, says some prayer with seeming decency and attention.

The Romanists doubt of the validity of the Abyssinian consecration of the elements; because in their liturgy it is plainly said, "Lord, put thy hand upon this cup, and bless it, and sanctify it, and purify it, that in it may be made thy holy blood;" and of the bread they say, "Bless this saucer, or plate, that in it may be made thy holy body." And in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy pure body which is joined with this cup of thy precious blood." The Jesuits doubt of the validity of this consecration, because it is said, "this *bread* is my body;" and over the wine, "this *cup* is my blood;" whereas, to operate a true transubstantiation, they should say over the bread, "this is my body."

For my own part, I leave it to the reverend fathers, who are the best judges, what is necessary to operate this miracle of transubstantiation. The reality of the thing itself is denied by all Protestant churches, has been often doubted by others, has been ridiculed by lay-writers, and can never be a matter, I believe, of thorough conviction, much less of proof, to any. The dignity of the subject, on which it touches nearly, as well as tenderness for our brethren on the continent, an article of whose faith it is, should always screen it from being treated with pleasantry, whatever we believe, or whether we believe it or not.

M. Ludolf thinks, that the words I have set down are a proof the Abyssinians do not believe in transub-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

stantiation. For my part, from those very words, I cannot think any thing is clearer than that they do; the bread is upon the plate; they pray that the plate may be blessed, "That in it the bread may be made God's holy body*;" and of the wine they say, "That it may be made thy holy blood:" and in their prayer they say, "Change this bread, that it may be made thy body;" and again, "May the Holy Ghost shine upon this bread, that it may be made the body of Christ our God, and that this cup may be changed and become the blood, not the *symbol*, of the blood of Christ our God." With all respect to Mr Ludolf's opinion, I must think that, though the benediction prayed upon the patine, spoon, and chalice, is but an aukward expression, yet, if I understand the language, *converte* and *immutetur* are literal translations of the Ethiopic, and seem to pray for a transubstantiation as directly as words will admit, whether they believe in it or not; nor, as far as I know, can any stronger or more expressive be found to substitute in their place.

I shall finish this subject (which is not in my province, and which I have mentioned, because I know it is a matter which some of my readers desire information upon) by an anecdote that happened a few months before my coming into Abyssinia, as it was accidentally told me by the priest of Adowa the very day of the Epiphany, and which Janni vouched to be true, and to have seen.

The Sunday before Ras Michael's departure for Gondar from Adowa, he went to church in great pomp, and there received the sacrament. There happened to be such a crowd to see him, that the wine, part of the consecrated elements, was thrown down

* See the Ethiopic liturgies passim. Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 5.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

796 and spilt upon the steps whereon the communicants
782 stood at receiving. Some straw or hay was instantly gathered and sprinkled upon it to cover it, and the communicants continued the service till the end, treading that grass under foot.

This giving great offence to Janni, and some few priests that lived with him, it was told Michael, who, without explaining himself, said only, "As to the fact of throwing the hay, they are a parcel of hogs, and know no better." These few words had stuck in the stomach of the priest of Adowa, who, with great secrecy, and as a mark of friendship, begged I would give him my opinion what he should have done, or rather, what would have been done in my country? I told him, "That the answer to his question depended upon two things, which, being known, his difficulties would very easily be solved. If you do believe that the wine spilt by the mob upon the steps, and trod under foot afterwards, was really the blood of Jesus Christ, then you was guilty of a most horrid crime, and you should cry upon the mountains to cover you, and ages of atonement are not sufficient to expiate it. You should, in the mean time, have railed the place round with iron, or built it round with stone, that no foot, or any thing else but the dew of heaven, could have fallen upon it, or you should have brought in the river upon the place that would have washed it all to the sea, and covered it ever after from sacrilegious profanation. But if, on the contrary, you believe (as many Christian churches do), that the wine (notwithstanding consecration) remained in the cup nothing more than wine, but was only the symbol, or type, of Christ's blood of the New Testament, then the spilling it upon the steps, and the treading upon it afterwards, having been merely accidental, and out of your power to prevent, being so far from your wish

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

that you are heartily sorry that it happened, I do not reckon that you are further liable in the crime of sacrilege, than if the wine had not been consecrated at all. You are to humble yourself, and sincerely regret that so irreverent an accident happened in your hands, and in your time; but as you did not intend it, and could not prevent it, the consequence of an accident, where inattention is exceedingly culpable, will be imputed to you, and nothing further."

The priest declared to me, with great earnestness, that he never did believe that the elements in the eucharist were converted by consecration into the real body and blood of Christ. He said, however, that he believed this to be the Roman Catholic faith, but it never was his; and that he conceived the bread was bread, and the wine was wine, even after consecration. From this example, which occurred merely accidentally, and was not the fruit of interrogation or curiosity, it appears to me, whatever the Jesuits say, some at least among the Abyssinians do not believe the real presence in the eucharist; but further I am not enough informed to give a positive opinion. To follow this investigation more curiously would have been attended with a considerable degree of danger; and therefore I have stated my only means of knowledge, and leave my readers entirely to the freedom of their own opinion, and to after inquiry and information.

The Abyssinians are not all agreed about the state of souls before the resurrection of the body. The opinion which generally prevails is, that there is no third state: but that, after the example of the thief, the souls of good men enjoy the beatific vision immediately upon the separation from the body. But I must here observe, that their practice and books do both contradict this; for, as often as any person dies, alms are given, and prayers are offered for the souls

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

of those departed, which would be vain did they believe they were already in the presence of God, and in possession of the greatest bliss possible, wanting nothing to complete it. "Remember," says their liturgy, "O Lord! the souls of thy servants, our father Abba Matthias, and the rest of our saints, Abba Salama, and Abba Jacob." In another place, "Remember, O Lord! the kings of Ethiopia, Abreha, and Atzbeha, Caleb, and Guebra Mascal." And again, "Release, O, Lord! our father Antonius, and Abba Macarius." If this is not directly acknowledging a separate state, it can have no meaning at all.

I have already said, that the Agaazi, the predecessors of those people that settled in Tigre from the mountains of the Habab, were shepherds adjoining to the Red Sea; that they speak the language Geez, and are the only people in Abyssinia in possession of letters; that these are all circumcised, both men and women. The former term, as applied to men, is commonly known to every one the least acquainted with the Jewish history. The latter is, as far as I know, a rite merely Gentile; although in Africa, at least that part adjoining to Egypt and the Red Sea, it is much more known and more universally practised than the other. This I shall call *excision*, that I may express this uncommon operation by as decent a word as possible. The Falasha likewise submit to both.

These nations, however they agree in their rite, differ in their accounts of the time they received this ceremony, as well as the manner of performing it. The Abyssinians of Tigre say, that they received it from Ishmael's family and his descendants, with whom they were early connected in their trading voyages. They say also, that the queen of Saba, and all the women of that coast, had suffered excision at the usual time of life, before puberty, and before her journey to Je-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rusalem. The Falasha again declare, that their circumcision was that commonly practised at Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, and in use among them when they left Palestine, and came into Abyssinia. 304 171

The circumcision of the Abyssinians is performed with a sharp knife, or razor. There is no laceration with the nails, no formula or repetition of words, nor any religious ceremony at the time of the operation, nor is it done at any particular age, and generally it is a woman that is the surgeon. The Falasha say, they perform it sometimes with the edge of a sharp stone; sometimes with a knife or razor, and at other times with the nails of their fingers; and for this purpose they have the nails of their little fingers of an immoderate length. At the time of the operation, the priest chants a hymn, or verse, importing, "Blessed art thou, O Lord, who hast ordained circumcision!" This is performed on the eighth day, and is a religious rite, according to the first institution by God to Abraham.

The Abyssinians pretend theirs is not so; and, being pressed for the reason, they tell you it is because Christ and the apostles were circumcised, though they do not hold it necessary to salvation. But it is the objection they constantly make against eating out of the same plate, or drinking out of the same cup, with strangers, that they are uncircumcised; while, with the Egyptians or the Cophts, though equally strangers, they make no such difficulty. In the time of the Jesuits, when the Roman Catholic religion was abolished, and liberty given them to return to their old worship, their priests proclaimed a general circumcision; and the populace, in the first days of their fury, or triumph, murdered many Catholics, by stabbing them with a lance in that part, as they met them, repeating, in derision, the Jewish hymn, or ejacula- 304 609

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 609 tion, "Blessed is the Lord that hath ordained circumcision!" so that, I believe, their indifference in this article is rather owing to not being contradicted; just as they are careless about every other part of religion, unless such as have been revived in their minds by disputes with the Jesuits, and kept up since, in part, among their clergy. But none of them pretend that circumcision arises from necessity of any kind, or from any obstruction or impediment to procreation, or that it becomes necessary for cleanliness, or from the heat of climate.

304 None of these reasons, constantly alleged in Europe, are ever to be heard of here; nor do I believe they have the smallest foundation any where: and this, I think, should weigh strongly in favour of the account Scripture gives of it. Examining the origin of this ceremony, independent of this revelation, I will never believe that man, or nations of men, rashly submitted to a disgraceful, sometimes dangerous, and always painful operation, unless there had been proposed, as a consequence, some reward for submitting to, or some punishment for refusing it, which balanced in their minds the pain and danger, as well as disgrace, of that operation.

All the inhabitants of the globe agree in considering it shameful to expose that part of their body, even to men; and in the East, where, from climate, you are allowed, and, from respect to your superiors, the generality of men are forced to go naked, all agree in covering their waist, which is called their *nakedness*, though it is really the only part of their body that is covered. We see even that there a curse * at-

* Gen. chap. ix. ver. 22.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

tended the mere seeing that part of the body of a pa- 304
rent, and not instantly throwing a covering over it.

I do not propose discussing at large the arguments for or against the time of the beginning to circumcise. The Scripture has given such an account of it, that, when weighed with the promise so exactly kept to the end, seems to me to be a very rational one. But, considering all revelation out of the question, I think there is no room to institute any free or fair inquiry. I give no pre-eminence to Moses, nor his writings. I suppose him a profane author; but, till those that argue against his account, and maintain circumcision was earlier than Abraham, shall shew me another profane writer as old as Moses, as near the time they say it began as Moses was to the time of Abraham, I will not argue with them in support of Moses against Herodotus, nor discuss who Herodotus's Phenicians, and who his Egyptians were, that circumcised. Herodotus knew not Abraham nor Moses, and, compared to their days, he is but as yesterday. Those Phenicians and Egyptians might, for any thing he knew at his time, have received circumcision from Abraham or Ishmael, or some of their posterity, as the Abyssinians or Ethiopians, whom he refers to, actually say they did, which Herodotus did not know, it is plain, though he mentions they were circumcised. This tradition of the Abyssinians merits some consideration from what they say of it themselves, that they were, in the earliest time, circumcised before they left their native country, and settled in Tigre. From this they derive no honour, nor do they pretend to any. It would have been otherwise, if the era fixed upon had been the reign of Menilek, son of Solomon, when they first embraced Judaism under a monarch. This would have made a much more brilliant epoch in their history, whilst it was probable, that they adopted circumcision under

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 the countenance of Azarias, the son of Zadok, the high priest, and the representatives of the twelve tribes who came with him at that time from Jerusalem.

304 171 It seems to me very extraordinary, that, if circumcision was originally a Jewish invention, all those nations to the south should be absolutely ignorant of it, while others to the northward were so early acquainted with it; for none of those nations upon the Nile (excepting the Shepherds), either know or practise it to this day; though, ever since the 1400th year before Christ, they have been in the closest connection with the Jews. This would rather make me believe, that the rite of circumcision went northward from the plain of Mamre; for it certainly made no progress southward from Egypt. We see it obtained in Arabia, by Zipporah *, Moses's wife, circumcising her son upon their return to Egypt. Her great anxiety to have that operation immediately performed, shews that her's was a Judaical circumcision; there was no sin that attended the omission of this operation in Egypt; but God had said to Abraham †, "The soul that is not circumcised shall be cut off from Israel."

The Tcheratz Agows, who live between Lasta and Begemder, in an exceedingly fertile country, are not circumcised; and, therefore, if this nation left Palestine upon Joshua passing Jordan, circumcision was not known there; for the Agows, to this day, are uncircumcised. The same may be said of the Agows of Damot, who are settled at the head of the Nile. It will be seen by the two specimens of their different languages, that they are different nations, as I have alleged. Next to these are the Gafat, in a plain open country, who do not use circumcision; none of them

* Exod. chap. iv. ver. 25.
† Gen. chap. xvii. ver. 14.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

were ever converted to Judaism, and but few of them to Christianity. The next are the people of Amhara, who did not use circumcision, at least few of them, till after the massacre of the princes by Judith, in the year 900, when the remaining princes of the line of Solomon fled to Shoa, and the court was established there. The last of these nations that I shall mention are the Galla, who are not circumcised; of this nation we have said enough.

On the north, a black, woolly-headed nation, called the Shangalla, already often mentioned, bounds Abyssinia, and serves like a string to the bow made by these nations of the Galla. Who they are we know perfectly, being the Cushite Troglodytes of Sofala, Saba, Axum, and Meroe; shut up, as I have already mentioned, in those caves, the first habitations of their more polished ancestors. Neither do these circumcise, though they immediately bordered upon Egypt; while the Cushite, adjoining to the peninsula of Africa, certainly did. As, then, so many nations contiguous to Egypt never received circumcision from it, it seems an invincible argument, that this was no endemial rite or custom among the Egyptians, and, I have before observed, that it was of no use to this nation; as the reasons mentioned by Philo, and the rest, of cleanliness and climate, are absolute dreams, and now exploded; and that they are so is plain, because, otherwise, the nations more to the southward would have adopted it, as they have universally done another custom, which I shall presently speak of.

Circumcision, then, having no natural cause or advantage, being in itself repugnant to man's nature, and extremely painful, if not dangerous, it could never originate in man's mind wantonly and out of free-will. It might have done so indeed from imitation; but with Abraham it had a cause, as God was to make his

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 private family in a few years numerous like the sand
171 of the sea. This mark, which separated them from all the world, was an easy way to shew whether the promise was fulfilled or not. They were going to take possession of a land where circumcision was not known; and this shewed them their enemy distinct from their own people. And it would be the grossest absurdity to send Samson to bring, as tokens of the slain, so many foreskins, or prepuces, of the Philistines, if, as Herodotus says, the Philistines had cut off their prepuces a thousand years before.

304 I must here take notice, that this custom, filthy and barbarous as it is, has been adopted by the Abyssinians of Tigre, who have always been circumcised, from a knowledge that the nations about them were not circumcised at all. It is true they do not content themselves with the foreskin, and I doubt very much if this was not the case with the Jews likewise. On the contrary, in place of the foreskin, they cut the whole away, scrotum and all, and bring this to their superiors, as a token they have killed an enemy.

Although it then appears, that the nations which had Egypt between Abraham and them, that is, were to the southward, did not follow the Egyptians in the rite of circumcision; yet in another, that of excision, they all concurred. Strabo * says, the Egyptians circumcised both men and women, like the Jews. I will not pretend to say that any such operation ever did obtain among the Jewish women, as Scripture is silent upon it; and, indeed, it is nowhere ever pretended to have been a religious rite, but to be introduced from necessity, to avoid a deformity which nature has sub-

* Lib. xvii. p. 963.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

jected particular people to, in particular climates and countries. 304

We perceive among the brutes, that Nature, creating the animal with the same limbs, or members, all the world over, does yet indulge itself in a variety, in the proportion of such limbs or members. Some are remarkable for the size of their heads, some for the breadth and bigness of the tail, some for the length of their legs, and some for the size of their horns*. There is a district in Abyssinia, within the perpetual rains, where cows, of no greater size than ours, have horns, each of which would contain as much water as the ordinary water-pail used in England does; and I remember, on the frontiers of Sennaar, near the river Dender, to have seen a herd of many hundred cows, every one of which had the apparent construction of their parts almost similar with that of the bull; so that, for a considerable time, I was persuaded that these were oxen, their udders being very small, until I had seen them milked.

This particular appearance, or unnecessary appendage, at first made me believe that I had found the real cause of circumcision from analogy; but, upon information, this did not hold. It is, however, otherwise in the excision of women. From climate, or some other cause, a certain disproportion is found generally to prevail among them. And, as the population of a country has, in every age, been considered as an object worthy of attention, men have endeavoured to remedy this deformity by the amputation of that redundancy. All the Egyptians, therefore, the Arabians, and nations to the south of Africa, the Abyssinians, Gallas, Agows, Gafats, and Gongas, make

* Some of these large horns are in Mr Bruce's collection of natural history, &c., at Kinnaird. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

304 their children undergo this operation, at no fixed time indeed, but always before they are marriageable.

When the Roman Catholic priests first settled in Egypt, they did not neglect supporting their mission by temporal advantages, and small presents given to needy people, their proselytes; but mistaking this excision of the Coptish women for a ceremony performed upon Judaical principles, they forbade, upon pain of excommunication, that excision should be performed upon the children of parents who had become Catholics. The converts obeyed, the children grew up, and arrived at puberty; but the consequences of having obeyed the interdict were, that the man found, by choosing a wife among Catholic Cophts, he subjected himself to a very disagreeable inconveniency, to which he had conceived an unconquerable aversion; and therefore he married a heretical wife, free from this objection, and with her he relapsed into heresy.

The missionaries, therefore, finding it impossible that ever their congregation could increase, and that this accident frustrated their labours, laid their case before the college of Cardinals *de propaganda fide*, at Rome. These took it up as a matter of moment, which it really was, and sent over visitors skilled in surgery, fairly to report upon the case as it stood. They, on their return, declared, that the heat of the climate, or some other natural cause, did, in that particular nation, invariably alter the formation, so as to make a difference from what was ordinary in the sex in other countries; and that this difference did occasion a disgust, which must impede the consequences for which matrimony was instituted. The college, upon this report, ordered that a declaration, being first made by the patient and her parents, that it was not done from Judaical intention, but because it disappointed the ends of marriage, "Si modo matrimonii fructus impediret id omnino tollendum esset:" the

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the imperfection was, by all manner of means, to be removed; so that the Catholics, as well as the Cophts, in Egypt, undergo excision ever since. This is done with a knife, or razor, by women, generally when the child is about eight years old *. 304

There is another ceremony, with which I shall close, and this regards the women also, and I shall call it *incision*. This is an usage frequent, and still retained among the Jews, though positively prohibited by the law: "Thou shalt not cut thy face for the sake of, or on account of, the dead †." As soon as a near relation dies in Abyssinia, a brother or parent, cousin-german or lover, every woman in that relation, with the nail of her little finger, which she leaves long on purpose, cuts the skin of both her temples, about the size of a sixpence; and therefore you see either a wound or a scar in every fair face in Abyssinia; and in the dry season, when the camp is out, from the loss of friends, they seldom have liberty to heal, till peace and the army return, with the rains. 304 765

The Abyssinians, like the ancient Egyptians, their first colony, in computing their time, have continued the use of the solar year. Diodorus Siculus says, "They do not reckon their time by the moon, but according to the sun; that thirty days constitute their month, to which they add five days and the fourth part of a day, and this completes their year. 805

These five days were, by the Egyptians, called Nici, and by the Greeks, Epagomeni, which signifies, days

* The reader will observe, by the obscurity of this passage, that it is with reluctance I have been determined to mention it at all; but as it is an historical fact, which has had material consequences, I have thought it not allowable to omit it altogether. Any naturalist, wishing for more particular information, may consult the French copy.

† Deut. chap. xiv. ver. 1.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 added, or superinduced, to complete a sum. The Abyssinians add five days, which they call Quagomi, a corruption from the Greek Epagomeni, to the month of August, which is their Nahaasse. Every fourth year they add a sixth day. They begin the year, like all the eastern nations, on the 29th or 30th day of August, that is, the kalends of September, the 29th of August being the first of their month Mascaram.

It is uncertain whence they derived the names of their months; they have no signification in any of the languages of Abyssinia. The name of the first month, among the old Egyptians, has continued to this day. It is Tot; probably so called from the first division of time among the Egyptians, from observation of the heliacal rising of the dog-star. The names of the months retained in Abyssinia are possibly in antiquity prior to this; they are probably those given them by the Cushite, before the kalendars at Thebes and Meroe, their colony, were formed.

The common epoch which the Abyssinians make use of, is from the creation of the world; but in the quantity of this period they do not agree with the Greeks, nor with other eastern nations, who reckon 5508 years from the creation to the birth of Christ. The Abyssinians adopt the even number of 5500 years, casting away the odd eight years; but whether this was first done for ease of calculation, or some better reason, there is neither book nor tradition that now can teach us. They have, besides this, many other epochs, such as from the councils of Nice and Ephesus. There is likewise to be met with in their books a portion of time, which is certainly a cycle; the Ethiopic word is kamar, which, literally interpreted, is an arch, or circle. It is not now in use in civil life among the Abyssinians, and therefore was mentioned as containing various quantities, from 100 years to 19;

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

and there are places in their history where neither of these will apply, nor any even number whatever. 805

They constantly make use of the golden number and epact in all their ecclesiastic computations: the first they call Matque, the other Abacte. Scaliger, who has taken great pains upon this confused subject, the computation of time in the church of Abyssinia, without having succeeded in making it much clearer, tells us, that the first use or invention of epacts was not earlier than the time of Dioclesian; but this is contrary to the positive evidence of Abyssinian history, which says expressly, that the epact was invented by Demetrius[1], patriarch of Alexandria. "Unless," says the poet in their liturgy, "Demetrius had made this revelation by the immediate influence of the Holy Ghost, how, I pray you, was it possible that the computation of time, called Epacts, could ever have been known?" And, again, "When you meet," says he, "you shall learn the computation by epacts, which was taught by the Holy Ghost to father Demetrius, and by him revealed to you." Now Demetrius was the twelfth patriarch of Alexandria, who was elected about the 190th year of Christ, or in the reign of the emperor Severus; consequently long before the time of Dioclesian.

It seems the reputation of the Egyptians had, from very old time, for their skill in computation and the division of time, remained with them late in the days of Christianity. Pope Leo the Great, writing to the emperor Marcian, confesses that the fixing the time of the moveable feasts was always an exclusive privilege of the church of Alexandria; and, therefore,

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[1] Encom. 12th. October. Od 3. tom. 1. Ann. Alexan. p. m 263.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 says he, in his letter about reforming the kalendar, the holy fathers endeavoured to take away the occasion of this error, by delegating the whole care of this to the bishop of Alexandria; because the Egyptians, from old times, seem to have had this gift of computation given them; and when these had signified to the apostolic See the days upon which the moveable feasts were to happen, the church of Rome then notified this by writing to churches at a greater distance.

We are not to doubt that this privilege, which the church of Alexandria had been so long in possession of, contributed much to inflame the minds of the Abyssinians against the Roman Catholic priests, for altering the time of keeping Easter, by appointing days of their own; for we see violent commotions to have arisen every year upon the celebration of this festival.

The Abyssinians have another way of describing time peculiar to themselves; they read the whole of the four evangelists every year in their churches. They begin with Matthew, then proceed to Mark, Luke, and John, in order; and when they speak of an event, they write and say it happened in the days of Matthew, that is, in the first quarter of the year while the gospel of St Matthew was yet reading in the churches *.

They compute the time of the day in a very arbitrary, irregular manner. The twilight, as I have before observed, is very short, almost imperceptible, and was

* This is not correct, at least with regard to written history; for whatever books they read in the quarters, it is uniformly the practice to denote the whole year by the name of an evangelist. The days of Matthew make one year, the days of Mark a second, of Luke and John a third and fourth, and so on in rotation. The four evangelists make a period of four complete years. E.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

still more so when the court was removed farther to the southward in Shoa. As soon as the sun falls below the horizon, night comes on, and all the stars appear. This term, then, the twilight, they choose for the beginning of their day, and call it Nagge, which is the very time the twilight of the morning lasts. The same is observed at night; and Meset is meant to signify the instant of beginning the twilight, between the sun's falling below the horizon and the stars appearing. Mid-day is by them called Kater, a very old word, which signifies culmination, or a thing's being arrived or placed at the middle or highest part of an arch. All the rest of times, in conversation, they describe by pointing at the place in the heavens where the sun then was, when what they are describing happened. 805

I shall conclude what further I have to say on this subject, by observing, that nothing can be more inaccurate than all Abyssinian calculations. Besides their absolute ignorance in arithmetic, their excessive idleness and aversion to study, and a number of fanciful, whimsical combinations, by which every particular scribe or monk distinguishes himself, there are obvious reasons why there should be a variation between their chronology and ours. I have already observed, that the beginning of our years are different; ours begin on the 1st of January, and theirs on the 1st day of September, so that there are 8 months difference between us. The last day of August may be the year 1780 with us, and 1779 only with the Abyssinians. And in the reign of their kings they very seldom mention either month or day beyond an even number of years. Supposing, then, it is known that the reign of ten kings extended from such to such a period, where all the months and days are comprehended, when we come to assign to each of these an

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 equal number of years, without the correspondent months and days, it is plain that, when all these separate reigns come to be added together, the one sum-total will not agree with the other, but will be more or less than the just time which that prince reigned. This, indeed, as errors compensate full as frequently as they accumulate, will seldom amount to a difference above three years; a space of time too trivial to be of any consequence in the history of barbarous nations.

However, it will occur, that even this agreement is no positive evidence of the exactness of the time; for it may so happen that the sum-totals may agree, and yet every particular sum constituting the whole may be false; that is, if the quantity of errors which are too much exactly correspond with the quantity of errors that are too little. To obviate this as much as possible, I have considered three eclipses of the sun, as recorded in the Abyssinian annals. The first was in the reign of David III. the year before the king marched out to his first campaign against Maffudi the Moor, in the unfortunate war with Adel. The year that the king marched into Dawaro was 1526, after having dispatched the Portuguese ambassador, Don Roderigo de Lima, who embarked at Masuah on the 26th of April on board the fleet commanded by Don Hector de Silveyra; and the Abyssinian annals say, that, the year before the king marched, a remarkable eclipse of the sun had happened in the Ethiopic month Ter. Now, in consulting our European accounts, we find that, on the second of January, answering to the 18th day of Ter, there did happen an eclipse of the sun, which, as it was in the time of the year when the sky is cloudless both night and day, must have been visible all the time of its duration. So here our accounts do agree precisely.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

The second happened on the 13th year of the reign of Claudius, as the Abyssinian account states it. Claudius succeeded to the crown in 1540, and the 13th year of his reign will fall to be in 1553. Now we find this eclipse did happen in the same clear season of the year, that is, on the 24th of January 1553; so, in this second instance, our chronology is perfectly correct. 805

The third eclipse of the sun happened in the 7th year of the reign of Yasous II., in Magabit, the seventh month of the Abyssinians. Now Yasous came to the crown in 1729, so that the 7th year of his reign will be in 1736, and on the 4th day of October, answering to the 8th day of the month Tekemt, N.S. In that year, we see this eclipse observed in Europe.

As a further confirmation of this, we have stated the particulars of a comet which, the Abyssinian annals say, appeared at Gondar in the month of November, in the 9th year of the reign of Yasous I.; and as this comet was observed in Europe to have come to its perihelion in December 1689, and as that year, according to our account, was really the 9th of that king's reign, no further proof of the exactness of our chronology can possibly be required. By means of these observations, counting backward to the time of Icon Amlac, and again forward to the death of Joas, which happened in 1768, and assigning to each prince the number of years that his own historians say he reigned, I have, in the most unexceptionable manner that I can devise, settled the chronology of this country; and the exact agreement it has with all the remarkable events, regularly and sufficiently vouched, plainly shews the accuracy of this method. If, therefore, in a few cases, I differ two or three years from the Jesuits in their first account of this country, I do not in any shape believe the fault to be mine; be-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

805 cause there are, at all these periods, errors in point of fact, both in Alvarez and Tellez, much more material and unaccountable than the mistake of a few years; and these errors have been adopted with great confidence in the Hispania Illustrata, and some of the best books of Portuguese history which have made mention of this country.

[pp. 43-end not processed for the files.- (vol.5) Analyst]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

TRAVELS

TO DISCOVER

THE SOURCE OF THE NILE,

IN THE YEARS

1768, 1769, 1770, 1771, 1772, & 1773.

BY

JAMES BRUCE OF KINNAIRD, ESQ.
F. R. S.

THE SECOND EDITION,
CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

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[p. 42a]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-62, Vol. 7 have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS VII. AND VIII.

No. I.

Detached Articles from the several Journals and Common-place Books, containing additional information respecting Abyssinia *.

175 YASOUS TALLACK (the Great) subdued Lasta, and obliged it to pay 1000 ounces of gold per annum in tribute. It continued to pay till the war between Mariam Barea and Ras Michael, when each pretending to it, it became independant, and continues so at this present day, April 1770.

Harar is four days journey from Shoa, and seven from Aussa. It is farther inland, and a plain country. The chief has the title of Emir; and is frequently at war with Amha Yasous in Shoa, who is independant. The people are all Mahometans, called Turks by the Abyssinians.

317 Gold is found in the Shangalla's country in small lumps, is by them put into quills, and carried to Damot fair. This, at least, was the ancient custom when these barbarians sold their gold as necessity required. Since that time they have got scales and weights, and know, in general, the value.—The Agows are the purchasers, and adulterate it with silver;

* The paragraphs marked with N. B. by the Editor.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

317 one ounce to ten of gold, which gives it a very pale colour.

703 N. B. This observation is sufficiently confirmed by the colour of those links that still remain of the honorary gold chain conferred on Mr Bruce by the king of Abyssinia. These links are of a paler hue than a common guinea, rather coarsely made, and unpolished. Gold chains, called in Habbesh sunsulé, are a mark of dignity bestowed by the sovereign on the most meritorious persons in his army. It is usual to give a splendid suit of clothes at the same time, an Egyptian and Persian custom; vide Genesis, xli. 42. and Esther, viii. 15.

651 Wechne, in Belessen, is about 34 or 35 miles, a long day's journey from Emfras. There is paid, to maintain the royal family on the mountain, 250 ounces gold, and 730 cloths (this means webs of cotton cloth, called shuma). This is an old establishment. None are permitted to go up but the women carrying water. There was formerly a cistern, but it is now in ruins, and useless. There are near 300 persons there; and all the exiles are allowed to marry. Bacuffa escaped by help of his sister.

793 Extreme unction is unknown in Abyssinia; that is, the
792 anointing with oil. However, when a person is attacked with sickness, which threatens death, he often puts on a monk's hood, as a token that in case of recovery, he will abandon the world, and then receives the last sacrament, or rather he does so before putting it on; and it is generally the custom to distribute all his moveables to the churches, which the priests appropriate. These are traces of extreme unction. The great men ofen renounce the hood, and return to their former life.

792 N. B. The Abyssinian MS. histories are full of these instances, in which the great men, when disappointed in politics, retire to Waldubba, or other deserts, to live as monks. The distribution of goods and money made by the kings, when sick, to the churches, occurs in almost every reign. Before Yasous II. died, the Chronicle says, that he had given away every thing he had, in this way, except the crown on his head. When Joas was proclaimed, the Iteghe his grandmother wished to give a present to the poor, as usual at the begin-

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

ning of a reign; which she could not do, until one of the nobles supplied her with a sum of money. There were only a few derims left in the treasury. 792

Abyssinian Harvests. They first sow barley from the end of April to the beginning of May, or later; that is, towards the first rains. This ripens in the rains in June; and is carried off the fields into the house, that it may not rot. Then they sow fitches, which likewise ripen in the rains after. In September they sow wheat, or teff, which is cut down in December; and, if they have water, they sow barley, or fitches, again in January. In Woggora (a very fertile province), there is seed-time, and harvest, and plowing, in every month in the year; water being easily diverted to the grounds. The rent paid to the king for the ground is one-tenth of what they reap, yet, with all this, they are all poor; for a harvest, at a medium, is about twenty after one; and they sometimes, nay, very often, scarce reap the seed. They never manure the ground; and there are great quantities of rats, and innumerable ants, that consume their corn at different, nay, at all periods of its growth. All their five harvests do not, in produce, equal one Egyptian one; and they are at five times the labour. In the several villages, living, in general, is very miserable; and, in general, people of consideration scarcely know any other diet than teff bread and bouza. Whether this teff is black, or white, is the whole difference between the diet of master and servant. 241 [511] [262]

Abyssinian Dress. The principal part of the dress of the natives is a large cotton cloth, 24 peek (cubits) in length, and one and a half in breadth, with a blue and yellow stripe round the bottom of it. This blue is not dyed; but the Surat blue cloths are unravelled and woven for this purpose; and the yellow they dye with sûf, the yellow thistle. The best for ordinary wear costs 10 salts, or 1¼ pataka, about 6s. 6d. English. It is called Kuara, as probably coming from that province. They are very beautiful and light. The other pieces of dress are breeches, which reach to their mid-thighs; and girt with a white girdle of cloth to the common people; but the better sort have red Indian cotton cloths for breeches; and silk, or worsted coloured girdles from the Levant. When they ride, they only hold their stirrups between their great and 291 [435] 492

[p. 45]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

492 second toes. Even the king rides bare-footed; and being used chiefly to mules, they are far inferior horsemen to the Arabs.

Price of Gold. Gold, at a medium, sells for 10 pataka
436 each wakea; or 10 derims, salt, at a medium 8 per pataka.
435 The piece (of salt), speaking of it identically, is called Kourman, but in estimation, or such a thing costs so many salts, they are called Amooli. These are the ordinary currency for the necessaries of life. For considerable purchases, gold is used; and there is great loss in cutting the wakea into derims, at least one in ten. The gold is got by
[316] washing the earth in water, in wooden dishes. The grains,
that remain behind are put into a quill, melted down, and
[325] alloyed, probably by the Shangalla; for it is pale, and is never brought to market in its first form, but melted down into small rods, or ingots. In Joas's time a wakea was valued only at 8 patakas. Yasous Tanush, or the II. turned round, and reduced the Sennaar Shangalla; but they are now quite independant of Habbesh. Their fair is held at Buré in Damot.

804 *Weights and Measures.* The wakea (or ounce), in Abys-
436 sinia, is considered as 10 derims, or drams, and 12 ounces make a litir, or rotol (pound). At Gondar, the capital of all Abyssinia, the wakea is 6 drams, 40 grains, Troy weight English, and divided into 10 drams of 40 grains. The small money is salt bricks, dug out of the mines at Dancali, near the myrrh country. Every wakea, in ordinary times, gives from 72 to 76 salts. In 1769, the wakea was 80 salts, and June 15th, 1771, the wakea sold at 34, but there was a great difference in the size of the bricks. These are little or not at all liable to waste, as M. Montesquieu supposes. Abyssinian gold at Mocha is 15 or 16 patakas when the Sennaar gold is 22, because the Agows, &c. alloy it with silver.

At Masuah, the current money is the Venetian sequin, the pataka, or queen's dollar, and half-dollars. For small money are used grains of glass, called borjook, three of which make a chebir (Vid. Book V. Chap. ii.)

436 Corn sold at Masuah for four patakas the ardep, which
804 contains about 24 measures of the country. Coffee, six rotol per pataka, sometimes ten, or even 15 rotol. Honey,

[p. 46]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

four cuba for a pataka, each cuba about two rotol, or somewhat less. Butter, 20 rotol, for 1½ pataka, and 3½ harf. Civet, 1¼ pataka the wakea. Wax, 4 patt. the faranzola. Elephants teeth, 35 rotol for 18 patt. Water, 1½ paras the smallest jar, and 3 paras the largest. Abyssinian gold dust, 15 patt. per wakea, at Mocha. Dora, 12 measures for a pataka. The Venetian sequin goes for 2¼ patakas.

The Abyssinian grain measure is the ardeb, which, at Gondar, contains 10 measures, called Madega, each equal to 12 ounces, Cairo weight. An ardeb of grain costs 2 derims, or 2 patakas; an ardeb of teff, the same; 6 or 8 ardeb of tocusso pay an ounce (wakea) of gold, or 10 derims.

Servants Wages at Gondar *. At Gondar a maid-servant receives 15 salts per annum, and is fed in the house. A man-servant is paid 4 pataka yearly, which correspond to four wakea, or ounces of gold, Abyssinian weight, and receives besides two loaves, or cakes of teff, for his support daily. If his master is good, he sometimes gives him a little flesh, lentils, or vetches. He is not obliged to clothe him, but he sometimes gives him a pair of trowsers, which consist of about one-fourth of a yard of white cloth.

With respect to carriage, &c. three bundles of wood, which are brought from Tchagassa, three hours walking, cost a salt. The carriage of a jar, or manteca, full of wine, or honey, from Emfras, eight hours journey, pays a salt, of the weight of 3 faranzala, or so.

Thirty-three teff bread cost a salt; the loaves are about 3 lines thick, and 18 inches diameter. A pair of shoes (pantufle) cost a salt. 8¼ peeks of cloth is the least gift that can be offered in the country.

Bouza. Manner in which the Abyssinians make a kind of beer, that, in their language, is called bouza.

To make this, they use tocusso simply; but sometimes they mix it with grain (wheat), or dora, or all three together; but in ordinary tocusso is best. A jar of tocusso, or of the three sorts of grain, contains as much as is sufficient to make two loaves, that are a tenth part of the whole jar; besides which, they use about half a rotol of Ghesh leaves.

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* From this, to the 29th line of page 68, is a translation from the Italian of L. Balugani.

[p. 47]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

273 The first part of the process is to grind the tocusso, after which they take a fourth part of it, and knead it with water and leaven, as if to make bread. This they put in a jar to ferment for two days, at the end of which they make a good many thin large cakes, and dry them on the fire till they become as hard as a stone, then break them down into crumbs, and put them in a large vessel full of water, capable of holding six times the volume of the grain; or for one jar of grain, the vessel holds five of water, and one for the quantity of grain. At the same time that they put in the bruised bread, as above-mentioned, into that quantity of water, the other things should be got ready to go in also. The grain ought to be fermented for two days, then dried in the sun, and afterwards ground into meal. The Ghesh leaves are ground likewise. The remainder of the meal, or those three-fourths that were not used to make the bread, must be put into a hollow oven, over a fire, with a small quantity of water, and constantly stirred with a stick, until it become a paste; and when the water is dried up, more is put in, constantly stirring the mass until it become black like a coal. The whole so prepared, the crumbs, the mass, and the leaves, are put together into the large jar, and let alone for a day, after which it is poured off, and preserved in jars well stopped. At the end of seven or eight days this liquor begins to be too strong, and is best when fresh, two or three days old.

584 [581] *Marriage.* Marriage is not considered in Abyssinia as a sacrament, yet the church ordains some rules to be observed, in order that the man and the woman may be faithful towards one another. The ordinary method of marriage among people of condition, and among those who most fear God, is the following: The man, when he resolves to marry a girl, sends some person to her father to ask his daughter in marriage. It seldom happens that she is refused; and when she is granted, the future husband is called into the girl's house, and an oath is taken reciprocally by the parties, that they will maintain due fidelity to one another. Then the father of the bride presents to the bridegroom the fortune that he will give: it consists of a particular sum of gold, some oxen, sheep, or horses, &c. according to the circumstances of the people. Then the bridegroom is obliged to find surety

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

for the said goods; which is some one of his friends that pre- 584
sents himself, and becomes answerable for him in case he should wish to dismiss his wife, and be not able, through dissipation, or otherwise, to restore all that he has gotten.

Further, at the time when they display the fortune of the bride, the husband is obliged to promise a certain sum of money, or an equivalent in effects, to his wife, in case he should chuse to abandon her, or separate himself from her. This must also be confirmed by an oath of the future husband, and of his surety. A certain time, of twenty or thirty days, is determined also by a reciprocal oath, that on the last of these they will go together to church, and receive the sacrament. When all these matters are concluded, the future spouse appoints the marriage-day, and then returns home. When 585
that day arrives, the intended husband goes again to his bride's house, where she appears, and shews him her moveables (mobiglia), or clothes; and he must promise and swear a-new the fore-mentioned articles; and that he will use his wife well; never leave her without meat, or cloathing; keep her in a good house, &c. all which his surety must confirm. When this is over, the bridegroom takes his lady on his shoulders, and carries her off to his house. If it be at a distance, he does the same thing, but only goes entirely round about the bride's house; then sets her down, and returns her into it. After this ceremony, a solemn banquet takes place, consisting of raw beef and bread, and honey-wine, or hydromel, or another beveridge from grain, called bouza, a sort of beer very sour and disgusting. The feast being ended, the parties mount each a mule, and ride to the bridegroom's house, where is concluded all the ceremony necessary to marriage before they live together. When they have lived together during the appointed term of twenty or thirty days, they must both appear at church, and declare before the priest that they are husband and wife, and that they are come to receive the sacrament. The priest, without more ado, celebrates mass; they communicate, and return home.

After some time, although both have sworn to live all 586
their life faithful to one another, they take the liberty to separate; if it is the husband who wishes to get off, he, or his surety, must pay the wife that which she brought, and

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

586 likewise the sum stipulated in case of separation. If they have had children, the boys always go with the mother, even if there were but an only child; if there be no boys, she takes none of the girls. When the separation comes from the lady, the husband is liable to no restitution, provided he has been always faithful to the married state, as promised; but if it is on account of his bad conduct, or irregular life, that she forms this resolution, he is always subject to his promise and the above-mentioned articles.

It sometimes happens that the husband and wife, mutually, without any cause of ill-will, agree to part; in this case, the effects brought by the wife are united with the sum stipulated by the husband; then divided into equal shares, of which the parties take each one, and return to their former places of abode.

585 This is the established form of those marriages which are said to be celebrated justly, and according to the church. But, with regard to inferior people, these seldom take place; in proof of which I can mention what a person of credit asserted, who had lived twenty-five years in this country. He affirmed, that in all that time he had not seen, nor known, of a marriage at the church, in the places where he lived, except one single instance. I may add to his the testimony of a priest in Tigre, who swore solemnly, that in all Addua, the capital of that province, he was the only man who was married according to the church, that is, in the forementioned manner.

The ordinary way of marrying is this: When two persons ****. Here the MS. breaks of; L. Balugani having been either interrupted, or weary of the subject. It is to be regretted, that he has not given the manner in which the bulk of a nation, very little influenced by Christianity, perform one of the most essential ceremonies in life. His account of the marriage of the church is confirmed by Gregory of Hagara-Christos, in Ludolph's Abyssinian History and Commentary.

It may be gathered from various hints in Mr Bruce's papers, that the Abyssinian peasants and soldiers marry in a few minutes. No settlement, portion, or surety, being necessary, they eat an ox, or two or three sheep raw; the favourite method of cutting pieces from them, while alive, being

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

preferred; a great deal of bouza is drunk on the occasion; 585
dancing, shouting, and various kinds of licentiousness, are practised; if a priest be near, he sprinkles them with holy water, and repeats a hallelujah. The company join in the benediction; and no delicacy of manners constrains either the parties, or the guests. The bride does not appear abroad till about ten days after her marriage. These connections are easily dissolved; but the king's judges, and the governors of provinces, take care that the children shall be maintained by their parents, or others. Judgment is given in all matters by the civil courts; nothing being left to the clergy but the decision of matters fixed by the canons (kanoun), or positive law of the church.

The sons of the royal family confined in Wechne are allowed to marry, but it is only by connivance. No persons of rank give their daughters to these exiles. On the other hand, the Ozoros, or princesses, are given away to every great man in the kingdom, and their marriages and divorces are scandalously frequent. The ceremony at the marriage of a prince, or princess, is as follows *: The match having been settled previously, according to the views of the court, preparations are made for the festival, which is generally held during the rainy season, while the country is secure and abandoned to pleasure. The king being seated on the throne, in the large hall of audience, the parties are introduced before him, with their respective attendants. After kissing his hand, they are all magnificently clothed in dresses of brocade, or other rich stuffs, with presents of knives, &c. corresponding to their habits. The crown is sometimes set on their heads; they receive the benediction of the kees hatse, or king's almoner; after which they retire clothed with the caftan, and mount horses given them by the king, on which they ride in great state, in the midst of acclamations of joy and prosperity, to the house of the bridegroom. A banquet, or dinner, is prepared there; in the course of which, many oxen are slaughtered at the door, in order to furnish *brind*, which is served up, reeking from the animal. Deep drinking then commences; in which the ladies and gentlemen indulge together to a degree incredible, because it is un-

* Introd. to the small MS. Chronicle.

p. 51

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

585 known, in Europe. These marriages are, by no means, permanent: Many of the Ozoros, who always rule their husbands, marry as often as they please; dissolving the marriage preceding at the dictates of convenience, or fancy. But notwithstanding the general licentiousness, there are found several faithful wives and mothers, who are content to deviate from the common example.

766 When any of the king's children dies, it is the custom to hang the audience-chamber with tapestry and curtains, and spread carpets on the floor. The king, having entered, sits on the throne, and the *iteagerd*, a set of professed mourners [167] of the female sex, along with the nobles and household-servants, attend. One of the licaonte, a priest, reads over a list of the former kings with great solemnity, adding, after every name, "May the Lord have mercy on his soul, even to the fifth generation." The assembly reply, "Amen, ycoune, so let it be." At last he says, "Greatly may the Lord have mercy on the soul of ***, who died this day;" on which the Ozoros and their women, the mourners, the household, and the nobles, all set up a loud and general cry of lamentation, and weep for some time. If the person has died in the camp, or city, the coffin is brought before the king, but if not, he performs the ceremony without it. It is afterwards carried out with sendic and nagareet, and buried by the Betwudet, or Billetana-gueta dakakin, in the manner which shall be afterwards mentioned.

361 Koscam * is the richest church in Abyssinia; it is situated on the banks of Kahha, below a ruinous palace, or house, of the king. There are about 40 houses in the village, all belonging to the principal Kuaragna, the party of the queen. All the Kuaragna, Eshte, Eusebius, and the rest, had their troops drawn up to attack Michael when called to Gondar by Joas, at the advice of Lubo. They designed to engage him on the Angrab, but failed completely. The residing people at Koscam, after Joas's death, were in great fear of Michael, and wore a hood, or cowl, like the monks. Gondar is 2¾ miles, perhaps 3, at its greatest length, and nowhere above a mile broad. The palace is in the centre. Below the town, on the S. W. at the conflux of

* From this to the end, wholly in the words of Mr Bruce.

[p. 52]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

the Angrab and Kahha, is the Mahometan town. These rivers inclose the town on its N. and S. sides, and join on the W. On the S. E. part of it is the church of Debra-berhan. On the N. E. is Kedus Gabriel. Two suburbs above Kedus Gabriel, is Anta Naggar, the hill, where, till Yasous's time, the Tigre, in consequence of a proclamation, were obliged to halt, and not allowed to enter Gondar. 361

In Abyssinia there remains not a shadow of the hospitality, which is said to be a trait in the character of barbarous nations. 574

They divide the day into five parts (humisi). From the twilight, which is here short, it is nagga; about nine it is called selest, or the third hour; mid-day is kutter; three o'clock, tessaat; and sun-set, serk. They judge by the height of the sun, having neither clocks nor watches. The other hours mentioned in their books are counted 1, 2, 3, &c. after dawn, sun-rise, or sun-set. 805

There are two kinds of monarchy; one is absolute, where there are no written laws, but the will of the prince carried into effect by his command and force; another is, where there are laws and restraints, but these occasionally broken through. The Abyssinian government is neither of those. There are no laws: the lives of the king's subjects and their lands are *de jure* his; he is absolute and sole master of their lives and property: Yet he has no military force; this is all in the hands of the governors of provinces, whose safety lies in keeping the prince in want of every thing. It is a monstrous kind of monarchy, and to this are owing the continual wars and rebellions. While the districts were small, these were prevented; but minorities, weak reigns, &c. have united them into great ones, each of which are more than a match for the sovereign; indeed, the forty-four nagareets of Tigre united are more than a match for all Abyssinia. Damot and Agow-midre, joined to Maitsha, when they please, starve the capital, and leave the king not only without army and provisions, but even meat and clothes for himself. The Turkish and Galla wars have accelerated this state of affairs. Each of the governments have become a kind of fiefs, very rarely not granted to the family of the deceased, and that one of it most likely to be serviceable. 642 631

[p. 53]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

644 *King's Household.* The Serachmasery is Yesous Alaka*; he anoints the king at the coronation, and has ten ounces of gold for his salary. The Licaonte vote standing before the King and the Ras, but before the Billetana-gueta dakakin, and other meconem, sitting. Four licaonte and four azajes only vote before the king. The Palambaras was of old, in Tigre, called Lik sof. The Baal-magwass goes immediately before the king, dressed as the king, and his face, as the king's, half-covered. All his actions are imputed to the king; and when he kills an enemy in fight, it is said the king killed him. Shalaka are the heads of the king's soldiers, who are called by respective names, as Gimja-bet, Werk-saccala, &c. Azaje are officers over the king's household and revenues. The servants of the Licaonte are called Firaje and Baalheg; they vote with the Licaonte, and before them in civil causes. Rakmasery is superintendant of the bread, and the Shum mes of the wine, or hydromel. The Tersemba Azaje is the judge, or, as it is called, Dabna of the Wezizir, or nobles; Dimshas is an officer under him. Of the officers called Hadug, there are two; these are the king's wakeels, in the Abuna's house, and have one-third of his revenues.

Gera and Kanya wust-Azaje. He is the person, who, in capital crimes, accuses for the king; and is always one of the Licaonte, the most remarkable for his experience and discernment. Debena-bet haits is the person that executes, by his servants, all criminals at Debabay; he has the guard there at night, and, about three in the morning, gives the signal of the approach of day to the officers of the king's house by about 30 smacks of a whip, to drive away the hyænas and beasts of prey, that come to Debabye, the place of execution, in search of carcases. He has also the right of sending expresses to Gondar of the king's victories, and brings with him the heads, pudenda, &c. of traitors, which are exposed on the tree at the place of execution; at which time the merchants, both Mahometan and Christian, give presents, which, on great occasions, amount to 10 wakeas from each Moslem, and the same from the Atary, or Christian merchants. The viceroy, or kasmati of Ti-

* A church within, or near the palace.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

gre, drinks out of a golden cup, as keeper of the law at Axum. There are 12 nagareets in Tigre, and forty-four persons are invested with the Ras-werk. 644

Church affairs. The Abuna is appointed by proclamation of the king, and is deposed at his pleasure. He holds of no other person. He ordains priests and deacons within the kingdom, consecrates churches, altars (tabot), &c. His revevenue was once very considerable, esteemed one-third of the revenues of the kingdom; but as those princes, who made the grants, resided in Shoa, or in the south of Tigre, the principal lands are in those provinces, adjoining to the royal residence. Now, the southern provinces are all in the hands of the Galla, as well as part of Tigre, and the governor, or Ras, has assumed the rest; so that of 400 oz. of gold once paid by Tigre, the Abuna, in my time, got only twenty-five, one-third of which went to the king's wakeel in his house. The Abuna appoints no officer, civil, or ecclesiastical; the king, or governor, does all. The king appoints officers, called Alaka, who administer in all cases the revenue of churches and convents; and this person is the judge of differences and suits among the priests and monks of his church, or fraternity, from whom lies no appeal but to the King, or to the Ras, who is understood to represent him. This Alaka is, or is not, a monk, or priest, at the king's pleasure. Of those who are called monks, are the communities of Debra Libanos, or Azazo, as it is now called, Waldubba, Werkleva, Damo, Mahabar Selasse, &c. These live in villages in these places, and reside or not as they please. The rest of that name are those who are ordained on any illness, disappointment, or advanced in life. The monks are ordained by the Itchegue, the others by any ordinary priest. Neither take any vow. The women of Waldubba are of the first kind, and all women past pleasure compose the second. There are many instances of both orders renouncing and marrying. 793 794

All persons, as well ecclesiastical as civil, are subject to the same laws, judgment, and tribunal, without exception, be the cause of whatever nature it may be. The Abuna, or Itchegue, have none of them a tribunal, nor can they take cognizance of any cause; especially the Abuna, who has, as I have said, an officer in his house appointed by the king, who pu- 692

[p. 55]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

692 nishes all persons by that authority, even those of the Abuna's family, without any sort of deference paid to him; and this, as appears by the judges, or king's records, is of very ancient standing. The king calls an assembly of the clergy when he pleases, generally with the advice of the Abuna, and there is none considered legal if he is not present, if in the kingdom.

[682] Welled Hayrat (Ras Michael's son) was excommunicated for killing a refugee at the Abuna's feet, in consequence of which he confiscated the Abuna's villages in Tigre, nor was the curse ever taken off *. The Itchegue, or prior of the 693 monks, if he be chosen a lay-man, must be ordained by the 793 Abuna. He is named by the king, who nominates all superiors of monasteries. The Lika-cahanat, or chief of the priests, is ordained by the Abuna and Itchegue, who both hold a corner of a scarf put upon him. He is an inquisitor of morals among the priests, and has so much salt and cloth from each district. A priest at his ordination pays three salts to the Abuna. He comes to the house of the latter, enters, and kisses the threshold. The Abuna, sitting on a sofa at one end of the room, reads the Scriptures to himself. Then having paid his salt, the person retires and kisses the threshhold, returning without imposition of hands, or any ceremony. Old men are made priests, and young men deacons by a simple jussit. More probable accounts say, that there is only one salt paid, that the person stands at the door, while the Abuna, having made the sign of the cross, holding it in his hand, says, "I have ordained you a priest." The person then enters the room, kisses the cushion of the sofa, and retires. Many are ordained that can neither read nor write.

[764] The Abyssinians have an office for the dead; and worship 778 pictures of saints, even such as are not consecrated. This we had an opportunity of seeing, every time we were obliged to draw some Madonna. All those that saw it, kissed the 000 ground before it, with their foreheads on the earth. The

* The Abuna's house is a kind of sanctuary, in which criminals are protected from massacre, not from trial. They are sometimes tried there by the royal judges, or dragged from it to the tribunal.

[p. 56]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

principal revenue of the clergy is the presents made by those who are sick, or dying. The 794

The dress of the Acab saat is a purple burnoose, with a white turban, not unlike the Turkish Imams, or a white handkerchief hanging loose behind. The Kees hatze is the king's official confessor, official Alaka of the church of Tecla-haimanout, and curator of the two churches of Gondar. 292

The Abuna's words of absolution, in a case of excommunication, is, "Gzier ephiac," God absolve thee. [783]

Women, after having born a son, are excluded from the church 40 days, and if a daughter, 80. The really married are those who receive the sacrament on that occasion. Persons who have been connected with any woman, are excluded from church during three days; if that connection has been promiscuous, they are excluded seven; and then even admitted to receive the sacrament. If a man, really married, is guilty with another's wife, he is not debarred a longer period. Women in the menses are not allowed to enter the church till seven days afterwards. Circumcision is performed on the eight, and baptism is celebrated on the forty-first day of the child's age. On all the fore-mentioned occasions they only come within the inner precinct, and kiss the walls and door-posts of the church. The clergy are rigid in these matters, and that is, perhaps, one of the reasons why the churches are ill-attended. It is their only duty; the monks making no scruple of confessing that they cannot enter the church, for that day they had to do with a woman, which is not attended with any impeachment. 796 784 [846] [841] [304] [852]

Geography and revenue of Abyssinia.—The Iteghe from Bure in two days arrived at Metchakel, in her way to Gojam: It may be about as far as from this (Gondar) to Caroota; I suppose from 30 to 32 miles at farthest. From Metchakel to Nazarit six days easy journey; from 10 to 12 miles, I suppose, *per diem*. Gojam here belongs to Ayto Aylo, son of Ozoro Welleta Israel. The Galla are Toluma. The Galla who border on Amhara are much the worst of all the Galla, and the least worst are the Edjow east of them, bordering upon Begemder and Angot, called Guangoul Galla. Those near Amhara are Wutchali, Woolo, Amito, and Toluma; 131 361 101

[p. 57]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

101 and these Toluma come down to the Nile, and divide Walaka and Shoa from the Nile.

651 Agow-midre pays yearly to the king in all about 1000 ounces of gold; and 1000 dabras of honey, each dabra about 60 rotol. It pays also about 1000 or 1500 cattle. Ancasha, Azena, Quaquera, and Banja, pay their quota in honey; Banja, gold; Metchakel, Ayamico's country, gold; Zigam, gold, no honey. Danguiah, Dengla, and Saccala, all are called Ancasha. Dengla pays chiefly cattle, and a large kind of sheep called Macoot. Butter is no part of the meery, but is brought as a present on paying the meery. After passing the Kelti, on the right, by the Bronti, is Atchefer, after that Quaquera, then Dengla, then Banja, then Metchakel. Temhua belongs to the Ras, and the revenue is paid to him. The first heavy stroke the Agow received of late years was Waragna, father of this Fasil, bringing Galla from beyond the Abay, and wasting their country entirely. He burnt the houses and churches, and led away captive the women and children. Under the mild government of Casmati Eshte they began to revive, but now again under Fasil they are very low.

361 Metchakel is one long day's journey, I suppose 36 miles, from Boori (Bure); it is inhabited by Galla Djawi. After these are the Basso Gallo; and the Gooderoo Galla of Kasmati Boro. His place is called Hadis Amba. These border on Gojam, Damot, and Metchakel. Gafat is not one continued country, but villages here and there. Wumbarma is Gafat. Metchakel is, however, a much more considerable country. Beyond the Nile, west of Bure, the country for a considerable distance is dry, deserted, and uninhabited, the Galla living further into the territory. All the banks are there high, steep, and unwholesome, and full of trees. These Galla are Amoro Jidda. Guesgue belongs to the Iteghe, has a nagareet, and gives the title of Kasmati. It pays 1000 cloths, 50 oxen, and 100 wakeet.

The caravans of Egypt used to go from Aidab, or Gaidab, to Dahalac, in their way to Yemen, or Jidda, the port of Mecca. Souakin is seven days south of Gaidab.

101 563 The Galla, west of the Abay, say, that they are descended of a Gin or devil, and a woman of the tribe of Koreish. They are always at war with the Nareans, Abyssinians, or

[p. 58]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Mahometans. They reckon about 12,000 horse of Galla between the Nile and Narea. The tribes go every seventh year to the reigning house, where the council debates on the duties of government. The points agitated are, how our fathers governed, what measures are to be taken with murderers and robbers on the high-ways, how merchants are to be dealt with, &c. The young then declaim in favour of violence and injustice; after which the elders, five in number, are asked. These decide in favour of equity. The king is afterwards chosen by a plurality of voices.

Waragna, father of Fasil, was converted to Christianity. His father was Wusho (signifying a dog), of the western Galla, of the tribe Jimmali. He was a merchant; but being remarked to be brave in a battle Bacuffa had with these Galla, he was invested with the caftan, and made commander of several places on the frontiers of Damot.

The Djawi Galla of Damot, Gafat, and Metchakel, as also the Galla of Maitsha, came there, in the time of Yasous Tallac. The Basso, and other Galla of Gojam, were brought there by Hatze Fasil; others say his son Hannes.

Maitsha, from the place the Abay comes out of the lake to Courtohha, is 1½ day's march, at a moderate pace, 6 hours a day; from Courtohha, the hither part, to Samseen, one long day's journey; and from the same part to the Abay at Goutta, a very long day's journey, at a brisk pace.

The Shankala entrench their huts against surprise, and burn large fires. They wear a long shield, covering nearly the whole side, and five lances each, which they throw or stab with as needed. Bows and arrows are their chief weapons. They dig up gold among reddish earth, which they burn in the fire, and gather it as it runs out in small pieces like shot. They put it next in to a small purse, or other sort of bag. Every individual is free to search for it. They are flat-nosed and flat-lipped, very black, best shaped in the upper parts, but with bad knees and legs.

The Bure way to Narea is W. in the country south by Amoro. The nearest way is by Gojam and Gooderoo, performed in 30 days with loaden asses, about eight or nine miles a-day.

Harar is a very large town, has five gates, and is constantly at war with Habbesh, or the Galla. The ridge of hills

[p. 59]

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

36/ continues from Masuah to Cape Gardefan. Harar, Adel, and the Gibbertis, all hate Franks and Christians. Their prince is an Imam. The road north to the Toluma Galla is nearest by Harar; to the Woolo by Aussa. There runs the large river Hawash. There is no communication with the sea at Harar, which is surrounded on the south and east by multitudes of Galla through all that country to the interior of the continent of Africa.

From the Toluma Galla, which is one day south of Amhara to Guragué, is seven days of an ass from morning to night, I suppose 15 to 16 miles per day. From Guragué to Narea, 4 days; in their way they pass the Bashilo, but not the Kibbee, which passes through Narea. The Bashilo falls into the Abay before they pass Angheree, and they meet with it past Gerramidre before they enter Guragué.

From Raheeda to Aussa, 5 or 6 days. From Aussa to Harar, 6 days moderate journey; in 4 a strong man can accomplish it. From Raheeda to the Woolo, 15 days; from these to Amhara, 8 days. From Raheeda to Woolo all the country is plain; the journey is performed with camels, I suppose 10 miles per day. They carry water with them in girbas, and at one time are three or four days without any other supply. Aussa is now no separate kingdom, but dependant on Harar; the race of people was from Harar, and therefore they are not subject to strangers. They are called Mellassua, and still preserve their language, which is the same with that of the Gibbertis. They count up 317 kings. From this city was Mahomet Gragne. The whole country is Adel; from Zeila to Harar is 8 days journey; but Zeila is now little inhabited, on account of the faithlessness of the natives in robbing the Jelalib. Soomal is governed by a chief at peace with Adel. Harar, the capital of Adel, has 99 villages, all governed each by a vizir, and pay tribute.

Goutta is not in Damot, though depending on it. A small peaked hill, pointed with rock, is called Geesh, or Gutch. Southward, scarce a quarter of a mile from the fountains of the Nile, the plain ends in a precipice, planted with very tall sambucs, and other trees. In this is a cavern called Washa, which they say communicates with the fountains, and that when it rains violently the water overflows and comes in hither. The Shum Kella Abay told me, that in the constant

L p. 607

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

rains of Naasse and Hamlie, it never overflows at the springs, nor do the fountains seem larger. He remembered the accession of Hatze Yasous to the throne, and was about 80 years old. The east side of the Nile is less barren than the west side. Aformasha is not barren. 361

Singular custom. The Betwudet (in Habesh), upon the death of any Wiziro, is obliged to pay the expences of the ceremony, called Misle, which amounts to 100 oxen, 3000 loaves of wheat bread, 20 jars hydromel, wood, &c. the whole about 60 ounces of gold. The ceremony is this: A sort of figure, resembling the defunct, is placed upon horseback, in his usual dress, and so carried in procession about the outer court of the palace, with the royal standard (sendick) carried before it, and the nagareet beating. This is called, in this country, "burying with sendick and nagareet;" for which the Betwudet has 1200 ardeb of wheat yearly out of the Attekolla. 651 766

The route of the Islam merchants, S. is by two ways, with loaden asses, 8 or 9 miles per day. The way by Gojam is performed in 30 days to Sebou, and thence for other 10 to Narea. The Kibby, or Zebee, rises in Narea. Coffee, of different kinds, grows there in abundance, and the Galla feed on it. They use the lex talionis, but their internal justice is strict. They are very scrupulous of oaths: Wauke Laftan, by heaven and earth, is one of the most solemn. There are three races of Galla, the Guangoul in Angot, north-east of Begemder; Mahomet Ali, another farther west than the Guangoul, towards Amhara; and a third, Mahomet, brother of Lubo, west of Amhara. The rest are pagans; but when converted are said to be better Christians than the native Abyssinians. 487

Mahabar Selasse is four commodious days journey from Gondar, in the line of Tchemmera and Tenkel. Near it pass the rivers Shimfa and Gandova, the last of which has several very high cataracts; it joins to the Shankala, and is about two days journey from Tchemmera. Both rivers fall into the Nile. 133

The river Bashilo separates Amhara from Begemder; the Mashilla, a river of Gojam, and the river Nefasse, fall into the Nile at the same place. In the country of the Galla west of Damot, across or west of the Abay, there is little

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

133 water, and near the banks of the river the country is desert.

651 Damot pays 800 ounces (wakea) of gold; formerly 1000. Gojam 80 ounces, and 70 mules. Lasta 1000 ounces; these last years it pays no more, being at present annexed to Begemder. Tigre pays 400 ounces in salt and cotton cloths. Walcait 1500 ounces in cotton cloths.

131 361 The latitude of Adderghey is 13° 24′ 56″; of Macara, on Lamalmon, 13° 6′ 8″; of Gondar, 12° 34′ 30″; of Emfras, 12° 12′ 38″; of the fountains, 10° 58′ 58″.

000 *Note at Lebeia.*—The Arabs are fond of music, especially vocal; for they have no instruments but a kind of flute, of the size of a German flute, which gives a wild and not unmelodious sound, and the cymbal or drum, with ten pieces fixed to its sides, which is chiefly used in cadence in dancing, or for symphonies. Their vocal music, or songs, are upon first hearing disagreeable; but it rarely happens that one who has a good ear is not soon fond of them. They are all upon love; at least I never heard any that had war for their subject; some have religion, and are sung by their Shekhs, or saints. The former have effects upon their hearers nearly as extravagant as the ancient music produced. They have no music in parts, and have absolutely no idea of harmonical composition.

[pp. 81-end have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

[p. 62]